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A Concept Note for

The Africa Policy Implementation Impact Lab (located in 5 subregional universities in Africa and Carleton University, Ottawa)

Background

Living Labs have become very important in designing and generating ideas that provide solutions to various types of problems that companies, nations, and communities face, in our contemporary times. It is a process of co-creation of solutions to problems in which all relevant stakeholders are involved from design to implementation stages. It has different advantages, which include the creation of opportunities for stakeholders to make input to the design of a project, through participation and consultation. It also helps stakeholders to determine and contribute to the design of relevant action research. A living lab provides an opportunity for co-creation of learning that reflects the needs of the end-users. It enhances a sense of ownership, reflects local peculiarities, and fosters continuous learning experiences for both researchers and end-users. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, bringing the right people together with the right policy guidance offers an opportunity to



transform a laboratory infrastructure, giving it the robust technical underpinning needed to capitalise on the benefits and opportunities of globalisation and the Fourth Industrialization Revolution (4IR), while realising the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Context

The Africa Policy Implementation Impact Lab is a living Lab that is geared toward using technology such as Virtual Collaborative Tools, (Virtual Reality Projects), Big Data Analytics, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence among others in tracking decisions made at the African Union and Regional Economic Communities levels to ensure full implementation. Through digital technology, the Lab will facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement with the processes geared toward the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and other trade-related agreements on the continent. The Lab will also contribute to monitoring the implementation of AfCTA, build the capacity of bureaucrats, engage in political economy analysis of decisions, and foster multi-stakeholder engagement for beneficial implementation of other political and socio-economic decisions at the continental level.

The Policy Implementation Impact Lab is pertinent because it will help address the problem of policy implementation in Africa. Over the years, the lack of capacity for the implementation of decisions has undermined development outcomes in Africa. The location of the Lab in a university will facilitate the possibility of drawing on the expertise of faculty members, who are cross-appointed to the Institute of African Studies, Carleton University. It will also draw on the expertise of the Carleton University's Centre for Trade Policy and Law.

The take-off of the African Continental Free Trade Area provides a unique opportunity for socioeconomic transformation in Africa. However, this will depend on the extent to which the regional economic communities and state parties to the agreement can effectively implement different components of the agreement. For instance, there are concerns about how key programs of the African Union such as Boosting Intra-African Trade, The Minimum Integration Programme (MIP), and so on can be leveraged to achieve the main goals of the African Continental Free Trade

Area. Studies have also recognized the need for training for staff of Regional Economic Communities and state parties in implementing decisions of the African Union.

The relationship between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area requires synergy and complementarity that can foster the smooth functioning of the continental agreement. Additionally, the harmonization of macroeconomic policies among state parties, mainstreaming gender, and cross-border informal traders to the formal economic orbit, and safeguarding the productive capacities of African economies are other areas in which capacity needs to be built.

The Africa Policy Implementation Impact Lab is a joint initiative of the Institute of African Studies and Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, Pan-African Strategic & Policy Research Group (Panafstrag International), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Discussions are also underway to establish partnerships with five universities in each of the geopolitical zones in Africa. The Institute of African Studies, Carleton University is the only stand-alone centre for studying Africa among Canadian universities. The Institute parades well-experienced and qualified faculty cross-appointed from different departments in the university. The Institute has also forged partnerships with many universities and institutions in Africa.

In fostering capacity for regional integration in Africa, The Africa Policy Implementation Impact Lab will be charged with the following functions:

- Using digital technology to track the decisions of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities towards the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement
- Using digital technology to help in building the capacity of national and regional bureaucrats in implementing decisions of African Union and regional economic communities
- Using digital technology to monitor the impacts of decisions reached at the African Union and Regional Economic Communities.
- Training of RECs staff towards building capacity for the implementation of AfCTA

- Boosting synergies between Regional Economic Communities and state parties to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement
- Drawing experiences from other regional trade agreements outside Africa
- Building policy implementation capacity of state parties to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement
- Tracking the implementation of policies at regional and national levels
- Building capacity for trade and investment negotiations
- Facilitating civil society engagements in the implementation of trade and investment-related policies
- Facilitating private sector involvement in the implementation of trade and investment-related policies.
- Training future researchers on issues of trade policy, trade negotiations, and cooperation with third countries

Methodology

The methodology for the Africa Policy Implementation Impact Lab would include the facilitation of policy-oriented engagements with stakeholders involved in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. These include scholars, private sector organizations, civil society groups, policymakers and bureaucrats in the African Union, and Regional Economic Communities. Field Research will also be conducted as a critical component of the Lab. It will involve facilitating consultation through roundtables involving various stakeholders on the trade and regional integration sections in Africa, training and capacity building, political economy analysis of decisions, cost-benefit analysis of AU and RECs decisions, mapping the landscape of policy, impact assessment as well as monitoring. It will also include the use of digital technology to track the implementation of decisions of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities. The main research clusters would include the following:

Main Clusters of African Implementation Policy Impact Lab

Apart from the core functions of helping to boost capacity for policy implementation, the Lab will be responsible for managing research portfolios in the following areas:

- Regional Integration and Industrialisation
- African Continental Free Trade Agreement
- Innovation and Regional Integration
- Market Integration and Regional Trade Agreements
- Migration and Regional Integration
- Informal Economy and Regional Integration
- Cultural Integration
- Institutional Integration and Policy Convergence
- Regional Integration for Governance and Democratic Consolidation
- Regional and Global Value Chains through Industrialization
- Negotiations on regional and multilateral agreements
- Bilateral Trade Agreements
- Africa in the multilateral trading system

Partner Labs in African Universities

The Policy Implementation Impact Lab will work in partnership with partner universities in Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Cameroon.

These countries are drawn from the five subregions of Africa. The partner universities will be selected based on criteria such as:

- Research capacity,



- Postgraduate programs in development economics or political economy,
- Institutional support and
- Provision of in-kind assistance

Expected Outcomes

- Improved implementation of Policy Implementation at regional and national levels
- Development of capacity for implementation of treaties and protocols of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities
- Enhanced capacity of institutions at the African Union and Regional Economic Communities
- More involvement of stakeholders on regional integration issues in Africa
- Increased intra-African trade
- Increased participation of Africa in regional and global value chains
- Structural transformation of African economies
- Better assessment of the impact of policies and treaties of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities
- Enhanced participation of Africa in global value chains
- More synergy among trade related institutions in Africa.
- Strengthening the RECs to provide strategic support to Member States

Activities:

The key activities of the Lab will include the following:

- Research (minimum of one relevant research activity per lab per year)
- Capacity development (250 officials of RECs and member states trained on issues about the implementation of multilateral agreements, including AfCFTA).

- Training (50 PhD and Master's students)
- Policy Roundtables (one per lab)
- Monitoring of implementation of policies at Regional Economic Communities and national levels
- Impact assessment of policies in Africa
- Political Economy Analysis of African Union and Regional Economic Community Decisions

Technical Partnership

Given the technicalities involved in key aspects of the Lab, technical partnerships will be forged with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the African Capacity Building Foundation in Africa, Universities in Africa, the Centre for Governance and Public Management, Regulatory Governance Initiative and the Centre for Law and Trade Policy at Carleton University.

Governance

The governance structure of the Lab will include the following: A Board of Directors made up of the coordinators of the various Labs, The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Dean Faculty of Public Affairs, The Director of the Institute of African Studies, The Director of Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, representative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, representative of Panafstrag and Global Affairs Canada

Funding for the Lab

The Africa implementation Policy Impact Lab will require funding for equipment, staff, research, training, and capacity building. Besides, salaries of administrative staff and scholarships for Postgraduate students and Post-Doctoral Fellows will also be integrated into the Lab. The fund also

covers partner universities in Africa. This fund will be sourced from partners. Carleton University has provided an office space as an in-kind contribution.

Indicative Budget

A total budget of \$1,400,000 is projected per year for the operationalization of the six labs (Carleton and the 5 subregional universities in Africa).

The budget will cover the various following activities:

- Research (minimum of one relevant research activity per lab per year) **(\$150,000 per year)**
- **Staff Cost (Coordinator, Admin at Carleton (\$250,000))**
- Capacity development (250 officials of RECs and member states trained on issues about the implementation of multilateral agreements, including AfCFTA. **\$600,000 per year**
- Training (50 PhD and Master's students) **(\$150,000 per year)**
- Policy Roundtables (one per lab/year) **(\$300,000 per year)**
- Monitoring of implementation of policies at Regional Economic Communities and at national levels **(\$75,000)**
- Impact assessment of policies in Africa **(\$50,000)**
- Political Economy Analysis of African Union and Regional Economic Community Decisions **(\$75,000)**

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Outcomes Chain	Indicators and targets by 2027 (includes reach)	Program factors	Non-Program factors	(Outputs) and throughputs: Knowledge Products produced:	(Activities), processes and principles	Human and financial resources (Inputs) Read from L to R
Immediate Outcome Stakeholders (male, female / national, regional, continental) have increased access to information, have increased their knowledge and skills and are able to implement the AfCFTA and trade policy related reforms to boost intra-African trade, address cross-cutting trade issues such as gender and climate change, and maintain coherence with the multilateral and other agreements	Developed capacity for timely implementation of African Union / Regional economic decisions at the national level	<p>Program to keep record or, call to accountability the commitments to decisions made by the 54 African countries at the continental level concerning governance, trade and the economy</p> <p>A technocratic and depoliticised platform for providing information and analysis</p> <p>Program is able to provide easily accessible, understandable and useful information</p>	<p>National government are prone to competitions and usually bogged down by consideration for narrow national interests</p> <p>More than 80% of the previous decision of the ECA were not implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research papers • Studies <p>Knowledge Transfer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training workshops • Other learning opportunities such as seminars, conference, advice, • Opinion pieces • Policy briefs • Dissemination tools and platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Multi-stakeholder consultations *Needs assessment *M&E of the decisions taken *Create digital repository of the policies *Collect trade data for all 54 African countries * Analyse the economic and trade policies per country * Industry specific analysis (eg tourism) to reduce the trade and non-trade barriers to the free trade area * Benchmarking to set measurable targets * Trade negotiations 	

<p>Intermediates Outcome</p> <p>Enhanced AfCFTA agreement implementation of inclusive and environmentally-friendly complementary trade-related reforms, action plans and frameworks by RECs and national governments for reducing barriers to trade within Africa, including barriers to women entrepreneurs and traders</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Level of customs duties on imports 2. Share of intra-African goods exported (% of GDP) 3. Number of trade-related reforms, action plans and framework that include substantive , high quality gender equality content 4. Number of action plans developed by member 	<p>or where necessary, to provide capacity building of non-expert to make use of the expert data</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased participation of private sector operators and CSO's, including women entrepreneurs, traders and organizations, in regional and continental dialogues on the AU's trade agenda <p>Increased awareness and knowledge of the private sector and CSOs, including women entrepreneurs, traders and organizations</p>	<p>monitor advocacy opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships • building communities 	
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<p>Ultimate outcome Contribute to increased, inclusive intra-African trade flows</p> <p>To achieve full implementation of the African Union's objective African trade protocols of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement</p>	<p>States for reducing barriers to trade in Africa</p> <p>5. Number of countries that are on schedule in implementing their AfCTA tariff reduction commitments</p> <p>6. Number of AfCTA Strategies with appropriate measures for environmental protection</p>			<p>n, on trade opportunities and on inclusive trade policy design at AU and REC levels</p> <p>Multi-stakeholder engagement between governments, private sector and civil society, academic and development partners to hold to account the governments that have signed the ECA agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Measure impact of the economic and trade policies of countries + Measure outcomes of the implementation or lack of implement 		
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	<div>1. Percentage of intra-Africa trade (18%)</div> <div>2. Share of intermediate goods in intra-African trade (28%)</div> <div>3. Average Number of countries per year with increased levels of</div>			ation of these policies		
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	<p>intra-African trade (40)</p> <p>4. Value (Constant prices) of Intra-African Trade (Year by Year Comparison) (\$82.7billion)</p> <p>5. Number of African Countries with trade policies incorporating measures to address gender inequality including (in entrepreneurship) (11)</p> <p>6. Number of countries that have ratified the AfCTA (55)</p>					
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Outputs						
				<p>Ex ante analysis of unimplemented continental compacts/decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realist synthesis of policy outcomes <p>Eg. Ecowas trade liberalisation scheme (free trade and duty free trade within the region) but has not been observed. Nigeria did implement, what could have been the outcome for regional economic development if all 15 countries acted upon their commitments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -collection of historical trade and economic data - analysis of historical trade and economic data - analysis of what worked for whom (which countries), in what context, and why or why not? 	
